

Bayonet! Forward!



240TH Engineer Group Newsletter

1 June - Sept 1, 2006

Eight Months Complete

January 25th seems so far away from us now. Over eight months have passed since we left the Augusta Armory. The leave and pass rotation schedule is now in full rotation with several soldiers bringing back great reports of their time spent at home and on pass in Qatar.

June 14th marked the celebration of the Army's Birthday. Several events were held here at Bagram Air Field to mark this great day. The 10th Mountain Division chose this day to have subordinate units put on the Shoulder Sleeve Insignia of the 10th Mountain Division.



LTC Holbrook with the new patch

The two crossed bayonets represent the Infantry designation of the Division as well as the Roman numeral 10. The "Mountain" tab on the top signifies the specialized mountain training of the division.

Two soldiers were chosen from all the task forces to present their view of the significance of the Army's Birthday. PFC McFarland (who has recently been promoted to SPC), was

the choice from the 240th Engineer Group. In his speech, PFC McFarland used the time he has served in the Maine Army National Guard as a backdrop for his comments regarding the Army's Birthday. He received many accolades of praise for a job well done. We have reason to be proud of the great job that he did that day.



PFC McFarland speaks to the crowd

The dining facility decorated the tables and baked a special cake commemorating the Army's birthday. SPC Legere, SPC Bouffard and CSM Luce participated in the cake cutting.



CSM Luce, SPC Legere and SPC Bouffard

Coalition Engineer Day

The second of July marked a day of celebration and gathering of coalition members of Combined Task force Chamberlain. Polish, Korean, and Australian forces gathered with us at the South Engineer Camp in an early celebration of Independence Day. The day was highlighted by a barbeque, volleyball games, ping pong, and soldiers building friendships with their coalition counterparts.

The Construction Management Section stepped forward and provided the advance coordination and manpower needed to make the event a success. Great job CMS!



Coalition Volleyball Game

Remembering CPT Damon

June 15th was a day that we will not soon forget. CPT Patrick Damon passed from our midst due to a sudden massive heart attack. The shock waves quickly went through our unit taking us all by surprise.

The day of CPT Damon's passing, members of the 240th Engineer Group gathered and heard the sad news. Chaplains from the region provided support to our soldiers. Each person received the news in their own unique ways. One by one and memory by memory soldiers began to express their loss of such a great soldier, friend, mentor, leader, and family man.



CPT Damon's Memorial Ceremony

On June 17, 2006 there was a memorial ceremony held for CPT Damon at the Enduring Faith Chapel in Bagram, Afghanistan. Soldiers shared their grief and supported one another. Songs were sung and Chaplain Gibson offered a memorial meditation, and the ceremony was ended with the playing of Taps by the 10th Mountain Division Band.



Firing of Volleys

SFC Young, SSG Shannon, SFC Walker, SGT Rogers, SSG Polky, SGT Driscoll, and SFC McGuire all participated in the memorial volley.

240th Engineer Group Promotions



1LT Darrell Davis



SPC Jason McFarland



SPC Matthew McGee



SSG Trevor Gleason



SSG Matthew Rogers

**SGT Jessica Larrabee****SGT Jason Burnham****SGT Nathaniel Grace****SGT Driscoll at "Dirty" Rock**

Reenlistments

While in theater, several soldiers continue to take advantage of the tax free reenlistment bonus. The adventurous nature of some soldiers takes them far from the comfort of Bagram Air Field into the hinterlands of Afghanistan. It is in these obscure locations lacking all the conveniences and amenities of a large base that some of the soldiers below decided to further their commitment to the United States Army, and the Maine Army National Guard.

**SFC Matthew Walker**



SGT Shawn Hayden

“Good-Bye” to the Korean Engineers



Korean and US Engineers

It is with mixed emotions that the CMS section starts saying its goodbyes to the soldiers and marines of the 7th Rotation of the Republic of South Korea (ROK) Army Support Group. Soon, these soldiers will return to their families and friends in their homeland and a new rotation of ROK soldiers will begin picking up where they left off.

While deployed in Afghanistan, the 7th Rotation successfully completed numerous missions including engineering, medical, humanitarian, and others. As for their engineering accomplishments, they successfully completed thirteen major construction projects, each of which are crucial to the Global War on Terror.



Standing in front of the New Pole Barn

The Koreans specially recognized several soldiers within Combined Task Force Chamberlain for their support throughout the Koreans’ rotation. Included among those soldiers were: LTC Swartz, CSM Luce, LTC Leimbach, LTC Morton, LTC Corbett, MAJ Scott, MSG Smith, SFC Walker, and SSG Romano.

For those of us in CMS, it is bitter sweet to see our friends leave theatre. While it is hard to see them go, we are happy for them, knowing that they have completed their mission and are finally able to go home. We are also encouraged, knowing that this is one more sign that we are getting closer to the day that we too can return to our family and friends.

Finally, we are excited about the opportunity to work with a new rotation and have no doubt that they too will exceed all expectations and form close friendships with the members of Combined Task Force Chamberlain.

Mollai Girls School Ribbon Cutting**LTC Leslie Swartz****MSG Hayes, MSG Smith, LTC Hopkins****Village Girls****Afghan Media and MAJ Weston**

Greetings from the S5 office here at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan.

MAJ Weston and I have been very busy helping with reconstruction efforts scattered throughout our Area of Operation. The pictures provided reflect a very special day for CTF Chamberlain. We participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a girls' school in Mollai. The school will facilitate educating nearly 350 students from five surrounding villages. The day's agenda included guest speakers from the community, the singing of traditional songs by mini-choruses of both boys and girls, and a powerful message delivered by our Commander, LTC Swartz.

The headmaster of the school was very excited to have this new facility. In his words..."The old school was much too small. It was way too crowded. This school is my dream and the dream of all of the girls who'll be attending here."

MAJ Weston was called upon to give several interviews to on-site reporters.

His risk communication skills were challenged to the hilt, as he fielded some tough and demanding questions. The bottom line is that he did a terrific job of describing Civil Military Operations (CMO) and the role that CMO played in the overall plan to support Mollai and build the school. MAJ Weston pointed out that Mollai, like many other small villages in Afghanistan, is a village latent with talent, and that the Coalition Forces, especially the American Engineers, will help to develop that talent. His message to the media was that we'll help train the local populace to build their own schools. We'll help them learn how to build and maintain their own roads. And, most importantly, we will help them learn how to rebuild their own country and fear no evil along the way!

MAJ Weston is home on much-deserved leave, enjoying time with his beautiful family, and hopefully, recharging

his batteries. He knows that we're in a marathon, and much work remains for the remainder of our deployment.

In addition to building schools, CTF Chamberlain's Civil Military Assistance Team has been involved in many projects of a humanitarian nature. From coordinating and contracting to rebuild washed-out roads between villages, to building irrigation canals to allow farming and improve crop productivity, to assisting in the provision of medical visits to treat minor illnesses and provide much-needed medicine, to coordinating for the construction of wells and the installation of solar lights, to much, much more. Speaking for MAJ Weston, this has been a wonderful journey.

A wise man once said..."If you enjoy your job, you never go to work."

That's the tenet of our CMA Team!

Thanks to all on the home front for your support, care packages and school supplies. Thanks to you, Maine is on the map in Afghanistan.

*MSG Doug Hayes
CTF Chamberlain
S5 (Civil Military Assistance) NCOIC
Bagram AF, Afghanistan*

Bailey Bridge Project

Several members of the CMS Section recently played key roles in a crucial bridge construction project. The bridge, which was designed by the CMS Section will be instrumental to providing mission essential supplies to soldiers in remote areas of Afghanistan. Additionally, the CMS Section was in charge of the convoys that transported the bridging materials to Combined Task Force Chamberlain's subordinate unit down range, which will erect the bridge.

SSG Polky and SSG Romano, who were in charge of the convoys, did an outstanding job, assisted by many members of Combined Task Force Chamberlain. The bridging materials were delivered ahead of schedule providing the subordinate unit the opportunity to begin this crucial mission."



TF 27 Soldiers Constructing Bridge

(Article provided by CMS Section and written by SFC Matthew Walker.)

CTF Chamberlain News from the Field

PMCS Class At the ETT

AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY COMPOUND, Sharan, Afghanistan - Any American soldier knows that the key to a successful mission is proper equipment maintenance. American soldiers also know that the basis of a good maintenance program starts at the operator level. Mounted patrols are stopped in their tracks due to low oil levels in a HMMWV, or road construction is halted because of bad hydraulic lines in a Dozer. The difference between successful missions and complete disasters are Preventative Maintenance Checks and Services (PMCS) soldiers conduct on their equipment. In an effort to emphasize the importance of maintenance, a mechanic from Combined Task Force Chamberlain's 37th Engineer Battalion, taught a group of Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldiers how to PMCS two of their vehicles.



Army SSG Matthew Benson, a mechanic assigned to Headquarters Company, 37th Engineer Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C. demonstrates to Afghan National Army Soldiers the proper way to clean an air filter on a D7 R High track at the ANA Compound August 24

On August 24, 2006, Army SSG Matthew Benson, a seasoned mechanic from the 37th Engineer Battalion, CTF Chamberlain, instructed twenty ANA Engineers from an Engineer Company of the 4th Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 203rd Corps on how to properly conduct maintenance on a D7 R High track (the civilian equivalent of the Army D7) and a 330C L Front loader (the Caterpillar version of the John Deere HYEX). While a mission such as this would seem easy for an experienced mechanic like SSG Benson, the class presented several distinct challenges. Besides the obvious language barrier, the Caterpillar-made equipment is slightly different than the Army equipment US Soldiers operate. The Caterpillar machinery does not come with a step-by-step maintenance (-10 TM) manual like the Army equipment does. However, even if there were step-by-step manuals written in the native language of these soldiers, most of them can not read or write --a fact that renders such a technical manual useless. The ANA Soldiers must learn to properly maintain their equipment solely by viewing pictures or by committing the necessary steps to memory.



An Afghan National Army Soldier checks the fuel level of a D7 R High track as part of the PMCS class given by Army SSG Matthew Benson, a mechanic assigned to Headquarters Company, 37th Engineer Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C at the ANA Compound August 24

With the aid of an interpreter, SSG Benson taught the basics of a before, during, and after PMCS on each of the pieces of equipment. "Most of the Soldiers had training with the equipment at Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC), but this class is a good refresher" said Army CPT Mitchell, an American Engineer with the Embedded Training Team assigned to train the ANA Engineers on engineer basics. Starting with the Dozer, SSG Benson first taught the importance of safety such as avoiding wearing loose clothing or jewelry when working on a vehicle. He then instructed the Soldiers how to visually inspect the equipment from front to back, and top to bottom to observe any faults. SSG Benson turned the instruction into hands-on training by having each ANA Soldier turn on the vehicle and inspect the controls as well as the inside of the vehicle. The ANA Engineers got a feel for the Dozer inside and out by the end of the hour long class. "Learning how to maintain the equipment made me a better operator because I got to learn how it works," said senior equipment operator Ali Ahmad.



Army SSG Matthew Benson, a mechanic assigned to Headquarters Company, 37th Engineer Battalion, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, stresses the importance of performing preventive maintenance on a 330C L Front loader to Afghan National Army Soldiers at the ANA Compound August 24.

After a break for lunch, SSG Benson began the second block of instruction on the Front loader. This class was very similar to the first where the Soldiers learned to observe the vehicle for any faults as well as inspect the controls and the inner workings. SSG Benson explained how critical it is to keep a vehicle free of mud in order to be able to thoroughly check the equipment. He also described the different categories of leaks using small, medium, and large instead of the typical Class I, II, and III. CPT Mitchell figured the ANA Soldiers would grasp the concept of the leaks using sizes rather than classes. This class, also an hour long, gave the ANA Soldiers an idea of how to properly maintain their equipment and also drove home the importance of PMCS. "The instruction taught my men the basic fundamentals to help with the upkeep of the equipment," said Captain Amrullah, Afghan Engineer Commander. Although the instruction just covered the basics, it is the first step to having the ANA Soldiers become proficient in their maintenance. "I learned a lot and the class filled in the gaps of what I already knew," said Seriel Omer, a bulldozer operator. Overall, the instruction was quite beneficial to the ANA Engineers and surprisingly valuable to SSG Benson as well. "It was a rewarding experience because it helped relations between [Afghan] and American Soldiers," Benson said. "They were very attentive and receptive to the information. I was thankful to be given the opportunity to teach the class. I now feel that the operators have the basic knowledge to maintain and upkeep the vehicles in order to accomplish their mission". Not only did the PMCS class assist the ANA engineers in developing a better understanding of keeping their equipment running fully mission capable for longer periods of time, but it also allowed American Soldiers and ANA Soldiers the

opportunity to work together as a team to help fight the War on Terrorism. The basic maintenance instruction was yet another stepping stone to allow the ANA to be able to function independently of the American Army. With more skilled and proficient soldiers in the Afghan National Army, this goal will soon be accomplished.

Article By: CPT Becky Lapidow

Photos By: SPC Karen M. Shevelev.

Headquarters Company, Task Force Eagle

Further pictures can be found at the 240th Engineer Group's website:

http://www.me.ngb.army.mil/Family/Family_Pages/240th/default.htm

The mailing address for letters and packages is:

Soldier' Name without rank
240th Engineer Group
CTF Chamberlain
APO AE 09354



**Bayonet!
Forward!**